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THE ANTIGONE OF EURIPIDES

BY JAMES M. PATON

IN the *American Journal of Archaeology*, III, (1899) pp. 183-201, Professor J. H. Huddilston has performed the welcome service of republishing the two vases containing scenes from the story of Antigone, with the passages from the ancient writers which throw light upon their source. It can scarcely be doubted that this source is the same tragedy which forms the basis of *Fabula 72* of Hyginus, though in view of the decided divergencies between the vases it seems unlikely that either painter derived his inspiration from a performance of the play. Granting, however, that the vases and Hyginus tell the same story, is this the version of Euripides? Professor Huddilston argues that it is, but it seems to me that the evidence will bear another examination.¹

For the reconstruction of any lost play there are available, first, the fragments, second, direct testimony as to the plot. The indirect evidence furnished by the mythographers and works of art, though often very valuable, is only secondary, and as a rule cannot be used to correct but only to confirm and elaborate the primary sources. In the present case the fragments are so scanty — only 41 verses — and in character so largely gnomic that they throw but little light upon the treatment. It is only necessary to compare the totally different reconstructions of Welcker and Wecklein to see that a little ingenuity can accommodate them to almost any scheme.

¹ That Hyginus contains the plot of Euripides' *Antigone* has been maintained by Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* II, 563 ff., III, 1588 ff.; Klügmann, *Ann. d. Inst.*, 1876, 173 ff., and Max. Mayer, *De Euripidis Mythopoeia*, 73 ff. The contrary opinion is defended, among others, by Schneidewin, *Philologus*, VI, 593 ff. and *Antigone, Einl.*; Heydemann, *Nacheuripideische Antigone*; Vogel, *Szenen euripideischer Tragödien in griechischen Vasengemälden*, 47 ff., and Wecklein, *Über drei verlorenen Tragödien des Euripides, Sitzb. bay. Akad.* 1878, II, 186 ff. Many of the considerations urged in the course of this paper will be found in these articles, but I have usually omitted specific references.

If the fragments cannot be used as a basis, it is obvious that the starting point of the investigation must be the direct statements of the ancient writers as to Euripides' treatment of the story. In this case it must be admitted that the statements are somewhat less conclusive than could be desired, though even in their present condition, I doubt if they can be naturally interpreted in more than one way.

Two passages profess to give us information as to the Euripidean version of the story of Antigone. (1) The Hypothesis of Aristophanes of Byzantium to the *Antigone* of Sophocles, *ad fin.* κείται ἡ μυθοποιία καὶ παρὰ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Ἀντιγόῃ· πλὴν ἐκεῖ φωραθείσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἰμονος διδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν καὶ τέκνον τίττει τὸν Μαίονα. (2) Schol. Soph. *Antig.* 1350, ὅτι διαφέρει τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀντιγόνης αὐτῇ, ὅτι φωραθείσα ἐκείνῃ (Nauck, *c. conj.* ἐκεῖ μὲν) διὰ τὸν Αἰμονος ἔρωτα ἰξεδόθη πρὸς γάμον, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τούναντίον.

In spite of its variations, it is scarcely likely that the latter passage can be used as an independent witness, for the scholiast was doubtless more familiar with Aristophanes than with Euripides; but it is not therefore to be cast aside. It shows that the commentator had the statement of Aristophanes in substantially the same form in which it has come down to us, and that he understood it to refer to the entire play of Euripides, for the whole point of his comment is that, in Euripides, Antigone was given in marriage and *did not die*; ἐνταῦθα δὲ τούναντίον is meaningless if in both plays the heroine met death. He may have misunderstood the facts, but we may be certain that he knew of no statement that Euripides told of the marriage of Antigone and the birth of Maeon in a prologue. At first sight the words of Aristophanes seem to mean, (a) that Antigone was not alone in the burial of Polynices, but was assisted by Haemon; (b) that the result of the discovery was not her death but her marriage, from which sprang a son, Maeon. It is argued, however, by those who believe that Hyginus contains the Euripidean version, that these words of Aristophanes have no reference to the plot as such but only to the preceding events, which were narrated in a prologue or possibly developed in the course of the action. This question of interpretation requires an examination of similar phrases in other Hypotheses.

Before the *Eumenides*, *Medea*, and *Alcestitis*, we find the phrase παρ' οὐδετέρῳ κείται ἡ μυθοποιία, and before the *Orestes* παρ' οὐδενὶ κείται

ἡ μυθοποιία — a variation, which, as Wilamowitz suggests,¹ may be due to the extraordinary plot of that drama.

More important are the following :

Aesch. *Prom.* κείται ἡ μυθοποιία ἐν παρεκβάσει παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ ἐν Κόλχοις, παρὰ δ' Εὐριπίδῃ ὅλως οὐ κείται.

Soph. *Philoct.* κείται καὶ (L ὡς, vulg. δὲ) παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ ἡ μυθοποιία.²
Eur. *Bacch.* ἡ μυθοποιία κείται παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ ἐν Πενθεΐ.

Schol. Eur. *Hec.* 1, τὰ περὶ τὴν Πολυξένην ἔστι καὶ παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ εὐρεῖν (cod. Marc. 469 adds ἐν δὲ Πολυξένη. Wilamowitz, *Herakl.* I¹, 146 Anm. 39, reads τὰ περὶ Πολυξένην ἔστιν εὐρεῖν παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ ἐν Πολυξένη).

Eur. *Phoen.* ἐπιστρατεία τοῦ Πολυνείκου μετὰ τῶν Ἀργείων ἐπὶ Θήβας καὶ ἀπώλεια τῶν ἀδελφῶν Πολυνείκου καὶ Ἑτεοκλέους καὶ θάνατος Ἰοκάστης. ἡ μυθοποιία κείται παρ' Αἰσχύλῳ ἐν Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας πλὴν τῆς Ἰοκάστης.

In all these cases the word *μυθοποιία* seems to indicate the general treatment of the story, without reference to minor details. The argument to the *Prometheus* shows that where the story was not the real subject of the play, but only incidentally introduced, Aristophanes noted the fact. The scholium to the *Hecuba*, obviously dependent on a similar argument, is also evidence of the endeavor after accuracy in the references to other treatment of the same material. Most important, however, is the Hypothesis to the *Phoenissae*, for here the preservation of the *Septem* enables us to test the statements of the grammarian. It is to be noted that he has singled out three points as containing the essentials of the play, — the expedition of Polynices, the death of the brothers, and the death of Iocasta. It is certainly true that the same story is told by Aeschylus, but without the death of Iocasta.³

¹ *Herakles*, I¹, 146, Anm. 38a.

² Schneidewin, *Abh. d. Götting. Gesellsch.* VI, 19, conjectures κείται δὲ καὶ παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ὡς καὶ παρὰ Αἰσχύλῳ.

³ A sentence from the Hypothesis of the *Septem* is worth comparing: ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις στρατιά Ἀργείων πολιορκούσα Θηβαίους, τοὺς καὶ νικήσαντας, καὶ θάνατος Ἑτεοκλέους καὶ Πολυνείκου.

The conclusion seems warranted that *καίται ἡ μυθοποιία* means that the same general subject, already indicated in a brief statement, was treated by one of the other tragedians. If the treatment was merely incidental, or there was a variation in what Aristophanes regarded as an essential feature, a few words indicated the divergence, but mere details in the method of working out the plot do not seem to have been noticed. This might seem confirmed by the Hypothesis of the *Philoctetes*, for we know that in all three plays the general subject was the bringing of Philoctetes from Lemnos by Odysseus, though the differences in detail were radical. The text, however, seems corrupt, for it is scarcely possible that the well-known play of Euripides was passed over, and it is possible that more has fallen out.

Turning now to the *Antigone*, we find that the Hypothesis has this form: 'Ἀντιγόνη παρὰ τὴν πρόσταξιν τῆς πόλεως θάψουσα τὸν Πολυνείκην ἐφωράθη, καὶ εἰς μνημεῖον κατὰγειον ἐντεθείσα παρὰ τοῦ Κρέοντος ἀνήρηται· ἐφ' ἧ καὶ Αἴμων δυσπαθήσας διὰ τὸν εἰς αὐτὴν ἔρωτα ξίφει ἑαυτὸν διεχειρίσατο. ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τούτου θανάτῳ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ Εὐρυδίκη αὐτὴν ἀνείλεν. *καίται ἡ μυθοποιία κτλ.*

Considering the extreme brevity with which the subject of the play is usually indicated, we are warranted in believing that this portion has been expanded to meet the taste of later times. Reduced to its simplest form it sets forth the burial of Polynices, the capture of Antigone, her sentence and suicide. From this proceed the deaths of Haemon and Eurydice. Aristophanes adds that Euripides treated the same subject, i. e. the burial of Polynices and fate of Antigone, but with a fortunate ending and a decided difference in details. There is not one word to show that to Aristophanes the case of Antigone differed from the cases of Pentheus, Philoctetes, and the expedition of the Seven against Thebes, in which the same subject was used for complete plays by the different dramatists.

Is this interpretation of Aristophanes warranted by the fragments? We have seen that they cannot be used as the starting point for an inquiry, but any theory as to the contents of the lost play must be tested by a comparison with these remains. *Frag.* 157, *ἦν Οἰδῖπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ*, was the opening line of the play,¹ and *Frag.* 158, *εἴτ' ἐγένετ' αὖθις ἀθλιώτατος βροτῶν*, must have occurred very early in the

¹ Schol. Arist. *Λυν.* 1182.

prologue. But neither this beginning nor the mention of the shield of Capaneus in a lyric passage (*Frag.* 159) is satisfactory evidence for the time of the action. One fragment (176), however, seems to throw some light on this point:

θάνατος γὰρ ἀνθρώποισι νεκίων τέλος
ἔχει· μαθεῖν δὲ πᾶσιν ἔστιν εὐμαρές.¹
τίς γὰρ πετραῖον σκόπελον οὐτάζων δορὶ
ὀδύναισι δώσει; τίς δ' ἀτιμάζων νέκυς,
εἰ μὴδὲν αἰσθάνονται τῶν παθημάτων;

These words are evidently part of an argument to show the futility of vengeance upon the corpse of an enemy. In an *Antigone* such verses can refer only to Creon's treatment of the body of Polynices, and it is hard to explain their presence in a play concerned with events many years after the Argive expedition. The difficulty of finding a place for these verses in the version of Hyginus was seen by Welcker,² who found it necessary to suppose that Haemon reproached his father for his treatment of Polynices, when blamed by Creon for saving Antigone. The ways of Euripidean argument are doubtless often devious, but these words seem intended to lead the hearer to change his course, rather than to reproach him for deeds long past. To me the natural implication of the passage is that the edict of Creon is still in force, and consequently that the time of the action is the same as in the Sophoclean play.³

Three fragments, however, are supposed to prove the presence of a son of Antigone and Haemon.

Frag. 167. ἡ γὰρ δόκησις πατράσι παῖδας εἰκῆναι
τὰ πολλὰ ταύτῃ γίγνεται τέκνα πέρι.

Frag. 168. ὀνόματι μεμπτὸν τὸ νόλον, ἡ φύσις δ' ἴση.

Frag. 166. τὸ μῶρον αὐτῷ τοῦ πατρὸς νόσημ' ἐνι·
φιλεῖ γὰρ οὕτως ἐκ κακῶν εἶναι κακοῦς.⁴

¹ So Stob. *Flor.* 120.3 in Cod. A. according to Grotius; *Id. Ib.* 125.6. *τί γὰρ τοῦδ' ἐστὶ μείζον ἐν βοτοῖς.* Cf. Nauck, *Frag. Trag. Graec.*

² *Griech. Trag.* II, 570.

³ The importance of this fragment seems to have been first pointed out by Hartung. Cf. Wecklein, *l. c.* p. 186.

⁴ Wecklein, *l. c.* 189 cites Soph. *Ant.* 471, δηλοῖ τὸ γέννημ' ὧμον ἐξ ὧμοῦ πατρὸς τῆς παιδός.

Of these the first is obviously too general a statement to be conclusive, even if the text were sound, and though the second might be referred to Maeon, if there were other evidence for his presence in the play, the lamentations of Oedipus over his daughters and their fate seem to point to other possibilities for the word νόθος in a play connected with the Theban cycle. Considering that the source of the last fragment is Stobaeus, Süvern's conjecture, αἰτῆ for αἰτῶ, is by no means improbable; but even without this change, I see no reason why ταιρός must refer to Haemon, and it is very difficult to see in what way Maeon could manifest "the foolhardy stiff-neckedness of Haemon," especially if he were a *mutus* as Professor Huddilston seems to think likely. However, I do not wish to use the very inadequate fragments for a reconstruction of the play, but merely to show that they contain nothing inconsistent with the natural interpretation of the language of Aristophanes.

It now remains to examine the story in Hyginus and its relation to the primary authorities. His *Fab.* 72 in Schmidt's text is as follows: *Creon Menoecei filius edixit ne quis Polynicen aut qui una venerunt sepulturae traderet, quod patriam oppugnatum venerint. Antigona soror et Argia coniunx clam noctu Polynicis corpus sublatum in eadem pyra qua Eteocles sepultus est imposuerunt. quae cum a custodibus deprehensae essent, Argia profugit, Antigona ad regem est perducta. ille eam Haemoni cuius sponsa fuerat dedit interficiendam. Haemon amore captus patris imperium neglexit et Antigonom ad pastores demandavit, e mentitusque est se eam interfecisse. quae cum filium procreasset et ad puberem aetatem venisset, Thebas ad ludos venit. hunc Creon rex, quod ex draconteo genere omnes in corpore insigne habebant, cognovit. cum Hercules pro Haemone deprecaretur ut ei ignosceret, non impetravit. Haemon se et Antigonom coniugem interfecit. at Creon Megaram filiam suam Herculi dedit in coniugium: ex quo nati sunt Therimachus et Diopithes.*

That the source of this narrative is a drama can scarcely be questioned. Wecklein¹ has pointed out the ἀναγνωρισμός, so dear to the new comedy, and has referred to this play the quotation in Aristotle's *Poetics*, cap. 16 *ad init.* λόγῃν ἣν φοροῦσι γηγενεῖς, which certainly

¹ *l. c.* p. 190.

agrees well with the words, *quod ex draconteo genere omnes in corpore insigne habebant*. The subject of the play must have been the recognition of Maeon at the games, probably in consequence of some victory, the discovery of his parents, the unavailing intercession of Heracles and the death of Haemon and Antigone. Strangely enough, it seems to have been generally assumed that Heracles appeared in this play as *deus ex machina*.¹ The vases furnish no support for this view, and the words of Hyginus, *cum Hercules pro Haemone deprecaretur ut ei ignosceret, non impetravit*, are surely inconsistent with any such position. A *deus ex machina* cannot have failed in his intervention. If therefore Heracles did not obtain his request, he must have appeared in his ordinary character as mortal, and in that case it is not improbable that the play included his reconciliation with Creon, though of course the concluding statement of Hyginus, as well as other clauses in his narrative, may easily be scraps of mythographic learning. The events preceding the arrival of Maeon at Thebes must have been narrated at some point in the play, especially as this version of the story seems to have been original with this dramatist.

Omitting for the moment debatable points, the assumption of the writer was that after the capture of Antigone, she was given to Haemon for execution, but that he hid her in the country, where she bore him a son. If Haemon was ordered to kill Antigone, it is obvious that he was not arrested with her, as Aristophanes expressly declares was the case in the Euripidean play, for in that case both would be guilty, and the punishment of Antigone could not be entrusted to her partner in the crime. Even if an example for such a proceeding could be found, it is necessary to explain the absence of any precautions on the part of Creon for insuring his son's obedience. If the words *cuius sponsa fuerat* are derived from the original play and are not a mythographer's addition, the situation must have been similar to that in the *Phoenissae*, where Eteocles has indeed betrothed Antigone to Haemon, though she threatens to murder him if her marriage is to interfere with her duty to her father and brother.

Nor is this the only inconsistency between Hyginus and Aristophanes. According to the former the marriage of Haemon and Antigone was

¹ Welcker is of course an exception.

secret, the words of the latter are *δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν*, which certainly are a peculiar description of a secret connection. So far as I know *δίδοται* can be used only of the bestowal of the bride by her father or guardian.¹

Moreover, Eurip. *Bacch.* 1273-1276 is worth comparing²:

ΚΑΔ. εἰς ποῖον ἦλθες οἶκον ὑμεναίων μετὰ;

ΑΓ. σπαρτῶ μ' ἔδωκας, ὡς λέγουσ', Ἐχίονι.

ΚΑΔ. τίς οὖν ἐν οἴκοις παῖς ἐγένετο σῶ πόσει;

ΑΓ. Πίνθευς, ἐμῇ τε καὶ πατρὸς κοινωνίᾳ.

Here there can be no question of other than a formal and open marriage. It is true that Klügmann³ has also referred to Plato, *Legg.* 4, 721a, in support of his assertion that *κοινωνία* implies an illegal connection, but in that place the words *ἡ τῶν γάμων σύμμιξις καὶ κοινωνία* are used in the discussion about the *γαμικοὶ νόμοι*, and there is nothing to show that they refer to connections unsanctioned by those laws.

One other point of divergence remains to be considered. Hyginus says that Antigone was accompanied by Argia, and that together they laid the body of Polynices upon the pyre of Eteocles. This version of the burning of the body is preserved in the name of a place near Thebes, *Σῆρμα Ἀντιγόνης* (Paus. 9, 25, 2), though the local explanation supposed Antigone to be alone, since she had dragged the body because unable to lift it. The burning of the bodies of the fallen leaders is also mentioned by Pindar, and in all probability was found in the Theban epics, though there is no evidence that they contained any reference to the dishonoring of Polynices and the fate of Antigone. Argia early found her way into the Theban legend,⁴ for her presence at the funeral games of Oedipus was mentioned by Hesiod (Schol. Hom. *Il.* 23, 679), and it was natural therefore to associate her with Antigone in a drama where the part to be played by Haemon compelled a departure from the Euripidean version. Of course we may owe the presence of Argia to the mythographer; the main point of my contention is that Haemon as a companion is excluded by the sequel.

¹ Still stronger is the language of the scholiast, *ἐξεδόθη πρὸς γάμον*, for *ἐκδίδωμι* is the legal term.

² Cf. Vogel, *Scenen d. eur. Trag.*, p. 49³.

³ *Annali*, 1876, p. 180, Ann. 1.

⁴ Cf. Pauly-Wissowa, s. v. Argeia.

It is far from my intention to attempt a complete reconstruction of the Euripidean play. For that, as Wilamowitz has said,¹ the material is far too scanty. Certain conclusions, however, seem to me warranted by this study of the available evidence.

1. The time of the action corresponded in general with that of the play of Sophocles.

2. The love of Haemon and Antigone was given greater prominence, as is shown by his share in the disobedience of Creon's command. This is also confirmed by the prominence of love in the fragments.

3. The play had a happy ending in the marriage of the lovers. Such an outcome is of course inconceivable without divine intervention, though the *deus ex machina* must be left unnamed, for *Frag.* 177, ὦ παῖ Διῶνῃς, ὡς ἔφυς μέγας θεός, Διόνυσε, θνητοῖς τ' οὐδαμῶς ὑποστατός, is insufficient to prove the appearance of Dionysus, while the presence of Heracles in his human character in the later play seems rather against his divine intervention in the work of Euripides. This god of course prophesies the birth of Maeon, who was already known as the son of Haemon from Homer (*Il.* 4, 394), and doubtless also from the Theban epics.

With such a play as a basis and a desire to give the story again a tragic ending, without imitation of Sophocles, it is easy to see how the dramatic original of Hyginus and the vase-painters arose. Argia was substituted for Haemon as the companion of Antigone, because the love of Haemon must not be brought to Creon's attention. Then the action of the play was developed on the lines already familiar in the story of Hypermestra, Lynceus, and Abas,² but with a different ending. Wecklein indeed assumed that Theodectes, the author of a *Lynceus*, was also the author of this *Antigone*. Such an hypothesis is unnecessary, for we know of an *Antigone*, written by a contemporary of Theodectes, and so successful as to warrant the belief that it would suggest a subject to contemporary vase-painters.³

¹ *Anal. Eurip.*, p. 150.

² Cf. Wecklein, *l. c.* p. 191.

³ This identification was first suggested by Georg Müller, *sent. contr.* 4, appended to his dissertation *De L. Annaei Senecae quæst. nat.*, Bonn, 1886. I owe the reference to Professor A. Brinkman.

C. I. A. II, 973, shows that in 341 B.C. Astydamos was first with the trilogy, *Achilles*, *Athamas*, and *Antigone*. The poet was then at the height of his popularity, for the same inscription shows that in 340 B.C. he was victorious with the *Parthenopæus*, which seems to have procured for him the honor of a statue.¹

Under these circumstances it seems needless to strive after a reconciliation between Hyginus and Aristophanes, which can only be brought about by assuming ambiguities and confusion in both writers. These faults are unfortunately by no means rare in the commentators and mythographers, but when a natural interpretation of a text contradicts no known fact, and at the same time enables us to believe that our only authorities understood their own words, it seems to me not unlikely to be correct. We have too few Greek tragedies, and those few are too diverse in their structure, to make it safe to discard ancient testimony and draw conclusions as to the lost plays from any *à priori* reasoning as to what would or would not be ventured by an Athenian poet or tolerated by an Athenian audience.

¹ Cf. Köhler in *Ath. Mith.* III, pp. 112-116.